

Production Schedule Set At Arsenal

Continued production of explosives and ammunition at Joliet Arsenal for the next two years, though at reduced rates, now appears to be fairly certain, according to information released yesterday by arsenal officials.

Both the Kankakee and Elwood Units of the Arsenal recently received new ammunition production schedules for each month through March 1956. The requirements on which these schedules are based have been approved by the Chief of Ordnance and the Department of the Army, and are a definite part of the Army's present preparedness program. They will be adhered to unless some substantial and unforeseen change occurs in U. S. military planning during the two-year period.

THE NUMBER of workers that will be needed at Joliet Arsenal to fulfill these new production schedules has not yet been definitely determined, but estimates have been made by Col. R. B. Currens, Arsenal commander and J. Scott Brown, plant manager for the United States Rubber Company, which operates the Kankakee Unit for the Ordnance Corps.

These estimates indicate that employment at both units should stabilize by September of this year at around 3,300 workers and remain at that level for the following 18 months. About 1,500 will probably be required at the Government-operated Elwood Unit, where ammunition is loaded and assembled, and about 1,800 at the Kankakee Unit, which makes TNT and other explosives. This compares with the present work force of 2,700 at Elwood and 3,100 at Kankakee.

Part of the required reduction will be brought about by attrition—that is, by not replacing workers who voluntarily resign their jobs.

THE REDUCTIONS required at both places between now and September will be made as gradually as possible, it was emphasized, so as to minimize their effect on the area's economy and to enable individual workers to find other employment.

At both units, workers released from production lines and other

work areas will be utilized as much as possible to aid in laying away machinery and production equipment no longer needed under the reduced operating schedules.

This gradual and orderly laying away of production facilities at Joliet Arsenal and other ammunition installations will enable the Ordnance Corps to increase ammunition production to high levels quickly and at less cost to the Government if it should become necessary.

In 1953, Joliet Arsenal and the other eleven Ordnance Corps loading plants directed by the Ordnance Ammunition Center in Joliet produced 87 million artillery shells, in addition to vast quantities of land mines, aerial bombs, rockets, grenades and other ammunition, even though none of the plants was operating at full capacity. The propellants and explosives for all this ammunition were made in eight other Ordnance Corps installations, and the metal parts were furnished by some 4,000 private firms throughout the country.